(b) and (c) In order to meet the growing demand for container trains, it has been decided that organisations other than Container Corporation of India will also be considered for movement of container traffic.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) does not arise.

Separating Bhilai Steel Plant from SAIL

†604. SHRI RAMADHAR KASHYAP: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Government have received any proposal from Chhattisgarh Government for separating Bhilai Steel Plant in Chhattisgarh from Steel Authority of India Limited;

(b) if so, the decision taken in this regard; and

(c) if not, by when the same would be taken?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The proposal was not acceptable.

(c) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

SAIL's status

605. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) could not succeed, so far, to recover its sound financial health and is incurring heavy losses, despite Government's monetary help;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the details of financial help given, so far, by Government for restructuring Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) since February, 2000; and

(d) the present status of SAIL and the steps proposed to be taken in this respect?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SRHI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) and (d) Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has improved its financial performance and wiped out its entire accumulated losses in 2003-04 itself. It made a net profit of Rs. 2,512 crore in 2003-04 as against a loss of Rs. 304 crore in 2002-03.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) and (d) above.

(c) A Business and Financial Restructuring package for SAIL was approved by the Government in February 2000. The financial package provided waiver of a loan of Rs. 5,073 crore advanced to SAIL from the Steel Development Fund (SDF) and Rs. 381 crore from the Government of India. It also provided for Government guarantees for loan to be raised by SAIL from the market. Under this, a guarantees for Rs. 1,500 crore was approved with 50% interest subsidy to finance reduction in manpower through Voluntary Retirement Scheme, and for Rs. 1,500 crore (without interest subsidy) to meet repayment obligation on past loans. No financial help has been given to SAIL since February, 2000.

Investment in Steel Sector

†606. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the existing production capacity of steel in the country is 36 million tonnes;

(b) if not, the facts in this regard together with the total capital invested in steel sector in the country for the utilisation of the production capacity of steel; and

(c) the total work force required for optimum use of production capacity and the total number of people presently employed in the said sector?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) and (b) During the year 2003-04, production capacity of crude steel in the country was estimated to be 39.383 million tonnes. Information on total capital invested in the steel sector is not readily available.

---

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.